Donate to the S Donate

Jottings from June: October 1, 2016

In these waning days of summer (yes, I know that fall has officially arrived) we begin to appreciate the changing temperatures and turn our thoughts from vacation and family time to school and church and sports and playoffs and harvest. It is a time of shifting our focus and readying ourselves, as Christians, for a season of gratitude as we celebrate Thanksgiving and a season of waiting, wonder, and expectation as we travel through the Advent season and look to a new year.

As Rev. JR Finney, Southeast Conference Moderator pointed out in the last issue of this newsletter, we need to be prepared for a season of change. My tenure here is only for a few more months. The board is preparing to seek an interim Conference Minister. The staff is preparing to move to a virtual office. How do we keep our focus on God's presence in our lives and the call to follow Jesus as individuals and as organizations such as churches and Conferences in the midst of these kinds of transitions?

This is a time of hopeful presence. I am reassured by hearing the choir in one of our Southeast Conference churches recently sing, "God has never failed me yet!" And scripture reminds us that even after Jacob wrestled with the angel, when he awoke, God told him, "...all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!" (Genesis 28:14b-16)

And we are reminded as we look to the birth of the son of God, that at the end of his story, he tells the disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:16-20)

We all are familiar with Black Friday and Cyber Monday as the shopping season kicks off after Thanksgiving. But what if our focus was turned toward a different set of values other than consumerism. Celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving (in the U.S.), #GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving.

Giving Tuesday was started in 2012 by the 92nd Street Y and the United Nations Foundation as a response to commercialization and consumerism in the post-Thanksgiving season. It is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration. Last year over 700,000 people raised $116,000 online in over 70 countries.

Let's keep our focus on what is happening in the communities which we care about and care for. And let us practice gratitude and be generous in our giving whether the gift is one of presence, compassion, funds, goods and services, or helping to share the good news of the power of love to overcome the ills of the world. If we keep this as our focus and as our ministry, we will not fail God, ourselves, or our neighbors.

featured

‹ Caring Community: October 1, 2016

Continuing Ed Opportunities for Clergy and Church Leaders ›

Upcoming Events

NOV
5
Sat
(http://www.secucc.org/news-and-events/calend

10:00 am Commission on Ministry meeting @ Pilgrim UCC (http://www.secucc.org/event/commission-on-ministry-meeting-11-5/?instance_id=142295)